

Message Text

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ACTION COA-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 INR-07 IO-10 L-02 NSF-01

NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-03 RSC-01 OES-03 SS-15 SP-02 CG-00

DOT-00 DLOS-03 FMC-01 /076 W
----- 120723

P R 220820Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1875

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0318

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT, SENV, PLOS, ID, JN

SUBJ: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS ON SHOWA MARU INCIDENT

REF: JAKARTA 0810

1. EPA OBSERVER DR. HAROLD SNYDER IS BOTH INTERESTED AND WILLING TO VISIT INDONESIA TO MEET AND EXCHANGE VIEWS ON ENVIRONMENTAL METHODS WITH INDONESIAN OFFICIALS AS WELL AS ATTEMPT ASSESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF OIL SPILL ON INDONESIAN MARINE LIFE AND SHORE AREAS. SNYDER BELIEVES HE CAN CONCLUDE BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE EARLY NEXT WEEK AND WILL TENTATIVELY PLAN ARRIVE IN JAKARTA NO LATER THAN JAN 28 OR 29.

2. SNYDER INVOLVED PREVIOUSLY IN INVESTIGATIONS OF A NUMBER OF POLLUTION INCIDENTS AND PREPARED RELATE INFORMALLY HIS EXPERIENCE TO INDONESIAN OFFICIALS. HOWEVER, DATA ON MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND OTHER TECHNICAL INFO SHOULD COME FROM EPA/WASHINGTON. SNYDER PLANS TO TELEPHONE HIS EPA OFFICE (DIV OF OIL AND SPECIAL MATERIALS) JAN 22 AND WILL EXPEDITE INDONESIAN REQUEST REFTEL.

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3. OFFICIAL GOI REQUEST CHanneled TO THIS EMBASSY THROUGH INDONESIAN EMBASSY SINGAPORE FOR SNYDER TO VISIT INDONESIA WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL.

SUCH A REQUEST WOULD REINFORCE EMBASSY SINGAPORE EFFORTS OBTAIN PERMISSION THROUGH INDONESIAN EMBASSY HERE FOR SNYDER TO VISIT SHORES OF BATAM ISLAND AND PERHAPS OTHER NEIGHBORING INDONESIAN ISLANDS (BY LAUNCH FROM SINGAPORE). SNYDER ANXIOUS VISIT BATAM AND SURROUNDING

AREAS TO COMPLETE PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF POLLUTION DAMAGE TO BOTH SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA RESULTING FROM SPILL. SNYDER FEELS JAKARTA VISIT WOULD BE MORE FRUITFUL AFTER THIS TRIP. IN VIEW OF TIME INVOLVED, IMPORTANT GOI REQUEST BE RECEIVED ASAP.

4. FYI: SNYDER HAS MET WITH SOME RESISTANCE TO COOPERATION BY GOS. OBVIOUSLY SNYDER OPERATING IN SENSITIVE AREA AS GOS ANXIOUS THAT METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED AND ITS USE OF DISPERSANTS TO FIGHT THE OIL SLICKS NOT BE CRITICIZED LATER IN COMPENSATION CLAIM NEGOTIATIONS.

COMPLICATING FACTOR OF SNYDER'S VISIT HAS BEEN BASIC EPA POLICY AGAINST USE OF CHEMICAL DISPERSANTS IN MAJOR OIL SPILLS. HOWEVER, SNYDER HAS FOUND PORT OF SINGAPORE AUTHORITY (PSA) GENERALLY COOPERATIVE, AND HAS HAD USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON METHODOLOGY PSA EMPLOYED TO FIGHT OIL SLICKS. SNYDER HAS BEEN ABLE TO GET DATA ON AMOUNT, TYPE, FREQUENCY OF USE OF DISPERSANTS BY STRESSING PURELY TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF EPA'S INTEREST IN STUDYING THE SPILL. EFFORTS TO DATE TO MEET PRIMARY PRODUCTION DEPT OFFICIALS FOR PURPOSE REVIEWING PRELIMINARY WATER TESTING PROCEDURES AND FINDINGS OF POLLUTION EVIDENCE HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL. MFA HAS EXPLAINED INABILITY TO ARRANGE MEETING ON GROUNDS PRIMARY PRODUCTION DEPT IS JUST BEGINNING GATHER AND STUDY EVIDENCE AND AS YET HAS NO SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS. THEREFORE, GOS HAS NO INFORMATION TO EXCHANGE ON SUBJECT. WHILE THIS IS REALISTIC ARGUMENT IN VIEW OF PRIMARY PRODUCTION DEPT'S SMALL SIZE AND LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN OIL POLLUTION, GOS MAY POSSIBLY BE CONCERNED WITH LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS OVER FUTURE USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL DATA. AS CONSEQUENCE GOS HAS EFFECTIVELY CLOSED LID ON SNYDER'S COLLECTION OF DATA IN SINGAPORE ON WHOLE AREA OF POSSIBLE WATER POLLUTION AND EFFECTS ON MARINE ENVIRONMENT. EMBASSY INTENDS PRESS MFA AT HIGHER LEVEL FOR REVERSAL OF THIS DECISION.

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5. IN CONNECTION VISIT TO INDONESIA SNYDER UNDERSTANDABLY SOMEWHAT SENSITIVE AS TO HOW GOI PERCEIVES PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT AND IF HIS FINDINGS MIGHT BE UTILIZED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES AND ESPECIALLY IN LATER COMPENSATION CLAIMS. THEREFORE, EMBASSY FEELS IT ESSENTIAL THAT WHEN IN INDONESIA, SNYDER, WITH EMBASSY JAKARTA'S ASSISTANCE, OBTAIN CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ON GOI USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXCHANGED IN ORDER AVOID POSSIBLE MISUSE AT LATER DATE. END FYI.
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Message Attributes

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